

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough consideration provided in the present application. Claims 1, 2, 4 and 5 are currently pending in the instant application. Claim 1 has been amended and claims 3, 6 and 7 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter contained therein. Claim 1 is independent. Reconsideration of the present application is earnestly solicited.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter. Specifically, the subject matter of claims 3, 4, 6 and 7 has been indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent format. Without conceding the propriety of the Examiner's rejections, but merely to expedite the prosecution of the present application, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the allowable features of previously presented claim 3. In addition, claims 3, 6 and 7 have been cancelled. Accordingly, as indicated by the Examiner in the Final Office Action, all of the claims of the present application should be allowed and the present application should be permitted to issue.

Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 2 and 5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Milkovic et al. (DE 42 02 750). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In light of the foregoing amendments to the claims, Applicants submit that this rejection has been obviated and/or rendered moot. Without conceding the propriety of the Examiner's rejections, but merely to expedite the prosecution of the present application, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the allowable features of claim 3. Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

As to the dependent claims, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are allowable due to their dependence upon an allowable independent claim, as well as for additional limitations provided by these claims.

CONCLUSION

Since the remaining references cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but merely to show the state-of-the-art, no further comments are deemed necessary with respect thereto.

All the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed and/or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently pending rejections and that they be withdrawn.

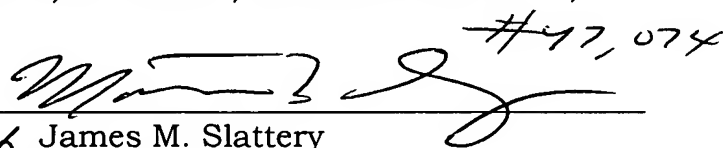
In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Matthew T. Shanley, Registration No. 47,074 at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicants respectfully petition for a one (1) month extension of time for filing a reply in connection with the present application, and the required fee of \$120.00 is attached hereto.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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